HOW TO CONDUCT WALKING AND BIKING AUDITS

Walk and bike audits that capture qualitative and quantitative data on active transportation infrastructure at specific locations through counts and surveys.

Audits are useful because they:

- **Demonstrate need to decision makers.** Audits highlight how many people use existing infrastructure and indicate priority locations for improvement.

- **Facilitate partnership development with community groups, schools, workplaces, or other stakeholders.** Partnerships increase participation in the active transportation planning process and invite buy-in for recommendations and improvements.

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<th>Benefits of Undertaking an Active Transportation Audit</th>
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| **Support grant writing** | - Grant writing often requires a significant amount of supporting data.  
- Surveys provide a snapshot of the community's needs and desires.  
- Actual count data emphasizes the need for active transportation improvements. |
| **Kick start projects and provide insight** | - Data on the number of people walking and biking at certain locations, as well as an up-to-date map of active transportation infrastructure, provides a boost to projects in terms of timeline and budget. |
| **Empower local Community Groups** | - Local jurisdictions can engage the community through counts and other data collection techniques.  
Demonstrating the community has supported the development of a grant application illustrates local support for the requested funding. |
| **Identify gaps in the network** | - Identifying the scale of the gaps within the existing infrastructure with accurate locations and distance, can help support new initiatives  
- Accurate maps indicating where improvements are needed helps make the case using evidence. |

The basic process of conducting a walk or bike audit takes a number of steps:

1. **Choose the areas/locations for the audit**
2. **Choose the type of data to collect and the method**
3. **Choose when the audit will take place and who will do it**
4. **Choose how to record and present the data collected**

**Tip:** Check with your local jurisdiction to see if they have a readily available tool that you can use to collect bicycle and pedestrian data, like SCAG’s Active Transportation Database at [bikecounts.luskin.ucla.edu](http://bikecounts.luskin.ucla.edu).
Bicycle and pedestrian audits utilize different methods. Walking and biking work well together, and require different approaches for planning and auditing.

**Pedestrian Audits**

Basic pedestrian audits or walking audits focus on sidewalk existence, maintenance condition, and crossing points. Pedestrian audits may also assess stress, noise, ambiance and perceptions of personal safety. Depending on the resources available, a basic or more complex audit may be appropriate. Key information to collect during a pedestrian audit includes:

- Roadways that currently do not have any sidewalks - these should be the highest priority locations to propose new sidewalks.
- Measuring where sidewalk widths fall below both 48” and 60”.
- Identifying where tree roots, utility poles, sign posts, or damage such as cracking may make the sidewalk impassable for wheelchair users.

Key questions to answer during a pedestrian audit include:

- Are there wheelchair ramps? Do crosswalks end at a curb and not a ramp? Intersections must be accessible to people with disabilities as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- Is lighting adequate for night time visibility? Can drivers exiting driveways or parking lots see pedestrians or is visibility blocked?
- Do marked crosswalks exist at all intersections?
- Is there adequate time for people to safely walk across the street at signalized intersections? How long are traffic signal cycles (the length of time for all directions of travel to pass)? How long do pedestrian crosswalk signals take once the button has been pressed?

**Bicycle Audits**

Bicycle audits focus on roadway infrastructure, bicycle parking and crossing points. Access from streets to the off-road trail network is also an important consideration for bike audits. Key data that should be collected during a bicycle audit includes:

- Identifying designated bikeways that do not have any signage or markings. Sharrows (painted bike symbols on the roadway) and street signs can easily improve awareness for drivers.
- Noting where sharrows, road signs, bike lane markings and cycle track infrastructure have faded, deteriorated or become damaged.
- Determining if anything inhibits the safe or comfortable passage of bicycles such as pot holes, tree roots, drainage grates, cracked asphalt, inadequate street cleaning, or pylons or trash containers acting as barriers.

Key questions that should be answered during a bicycle audit include:

- Is the type of bike facility (e.g. sharrows and street signs or protected bike lanes) appropriate for the street type (relative to speed, volume, traffic, network function)?
- Are there numerous parking lot entrances/exits? Can they be consolidated to reduce potential conflicts?
- Are motorists able to provide three feet of space to pass bicyclists if a sharrow or bike lane is not provided?
- Do bikeways provide adequate connectivity to major destinations?
- Can all road users adequately see people bicycling, and vice versa? Is the riding surface adequately lit at night?
- Are bicycle signals (either detection or buttons) properly positioned, functioning, and effective?

WHERE TO GET MORE INFORMATION


The Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center lists a number of walking and biking audit approaches, tools and checklists ([http://bit.ly/2af8Lnp](http://bit.ly/2af8Lnp)).